

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /056 W

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O R 062245Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7652

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR JJEP

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3050

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, HO, NU

SUBJECT: ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITY REPORTED

1. THE NATIONAL GUARD RELEASED A RARE COMMUNIQUE DATED AUGUST 2 REPORTING ON TWO CLASHES ON JULY 31 BETWEEN GUARD PATROLS AND SUSPECTED GUERRILLAS IN WHICH SEVEN CIVILIANS WERE KILLED. THE CONTACTS OCCURRED IN THE MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION OF EL SAUCE, LEON, WHERE A PATROL RAN ACROSS WHAT APPARENTLY WAS AN FSLN TRAINING CAMP; AND IN EL COPETUDO, AND NUEVA SEGOVIA WHERE GUERRILLAS PURPORTEDLY OPENED FIRE ON A GUARD PATROL. THE COMMUNIQUE REPORTED THAT THE GUARD DID NOT SUFFER CASUALITIES.

2. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A FOLLOW-UP TO THE EL SAUCE INCIDENT, THE NATIONAL GUARD INFORMED DEFATT THAT FOUR MORE CIVILIANS, INCLUDING TWO WOMEN, WERE KILLED BY THE GUARD IN THAT JURISDICTION ON AUGUST 5.

3. DEFATT HAS BEEN TOLD BY GUARD OFFICIALS (IR 6870005175) THAT ACTUALLY FOUR MEN AND A WOMAN DIED IN THE FIREFIGHT AT EL COPETUDO AND THREE MEN AND A WOMAN AT EL

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SAUCE. THE GUARD HAVE DEFINITELY IDENTIFIED SOME OF THE GUERRILLA

MEMBERS.

4. COMMENT: FROM THE SPARSE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO

US (AND PERHAPS TO THE NATIONAL GUARD AS WELL) IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE THE STRENGTH OF THE FSLN GUERRILLAS (CALCULATIONS RANGE FROM 60 TO AS MANY AS 400) OR TO GAUGE WHETHER ACTIVITY IS INCREASING OR DECREASING. THE GON SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT IT HAS THE GUERRILLAS ON THE DEFENSIVE, BUT APPREHENSIVE THAT IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME (YEARS, ACCORDING TO SOME ESTIMATES) TO ROOT THEM OUT OF THEIR PRINCIPAL AREAS OF OPERATION SUCH AS THE RIO BLANCO-RIO GRANDE DE MATAGALPAS REGION. MEANWHILE, THE GON REMAINS SENSITIVE TO THE EXPLOITATION OF THE HONDURAN BORDER BY THE FSLN, SPECULATING ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF TRAINING CAMPS IN OLANCHO AND THE SHIPMENT OF ARMS (FROM CUBA OR ELSEWHERE) UP THE RIO COCO RIVER. BUT THE NICARAGUANS HAVE YET TO PRODUCE ANY CONCRETE EVIDENCE ON THIS SCORE.

5. WITH REGARD TO NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE, ALTHOUGH GON CAN FUDGE ON NUMBER OF CIVILIANS REPORTEDLY KILLED, IT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR BUREAUCRATIC REASONS TO CONCEAL NATIONAL GUARD DEATHS. RUMORS OF HEAVY GUARD CASUALTIES, OTHERWISE UNCONFIRMED, SHOULD THEREFORE BE GREETED WITH CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM. ALSO, 80 MAN DETACHMENT HAS BEEN STATIONED AT RIO BLANCO SINCE APRIL, NOT 400 MAN BATTALION SOMOZA MENTIONED IN TIMES. FINALLY, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT TALK OF ROUSTING OF CAMPESINOS HAS DIMINISHED, NOT RISEN, DURING PAST THREE-FOUR MONTHS.
SHELTON

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